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ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken with 64 children (3 to 5 years of age) whose IQs ranged from 50 to 150 to determine what learning center activities preschool children would choose when teachers were not present and to determine how accurately teachers would predict their students' choices. Activity areas to which the Ss went were recorded on video tape and by teachers and observers behind a one-way mirror. Before the children entered the room, teachers had recorded predictions as to the number of male and female children who would be at a particular learning center at specified time intervals. Results are being analyzed. (LS)

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Predicting Preschoolers' Activity Choices[1]

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken to determine what choices of learning center activities preschool children make without teacher presence. Information also was sought to determine how accurately teachers could predict the choices of the children in their classroom.

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BACKGROUND

Many preschool programs including Headstart designate different activity areas in the classroom as learning centers. A learning center generally consists of materials which are set out by the teacher to encourage the acquisition of cognitive, psycho-motor, affective or creative skills. In some schools, teachers permit children to choose the learning center they wish to explore while others direct the child to a particular area. Recent studies (Fagot 1973) indicate that teacher presence and the nature of the teacher's interaction with the child at the activity center influences the children's task behavior.

PURPOSE

The present study was undertaken to determine what choices of learning center activities preschool children make without teacher presence. Information also was sought to determine how accurately teachers could predict the choices of the children in their classroom.

PROCEDURE

A sample of 64 male and female children ranging in age from three to five years of age with IQs ranging from 50-150 was used.

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There were four classes with 16 children in each class.

The children were met by the teachers outside the room, then allowed to enter the prearranged setting as a group. The teachers and observers were seated behind a one-way mirror and recorded the areas to which the children went at intervals of one minute, five minutes and ten minutes. A video tape of the children was made simultaneously.

The teachers and assistant teachers recorded their predictions on their lesson plans for the prearranged learning center settings. They predicted the number of male and female children who would be at a particular learning center at the specified timed intervals. Predictions were made before the children entered the room.

Results are being analyzed to assess the accuracy of teacher's predictions of children's choices independent of teacher supervision and to identify those activities which appear to be most frequently chosen by male and female preschoolers.